

kennedy street

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Geographic and Demographic Context

The one-mile-long Kennedy Street corridor extends from N. Capital St. on the east to Georgia Avenue on the west, spanning the Brightwood Park and South Manor Park neighborhoods of Ward 4.

The following data, unless otherwise noted, summarize the characteristics of the Kennedy Street population contained within Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs). TAZs are geographic areas commonly used to compile, analyze and exhibit demographic data.

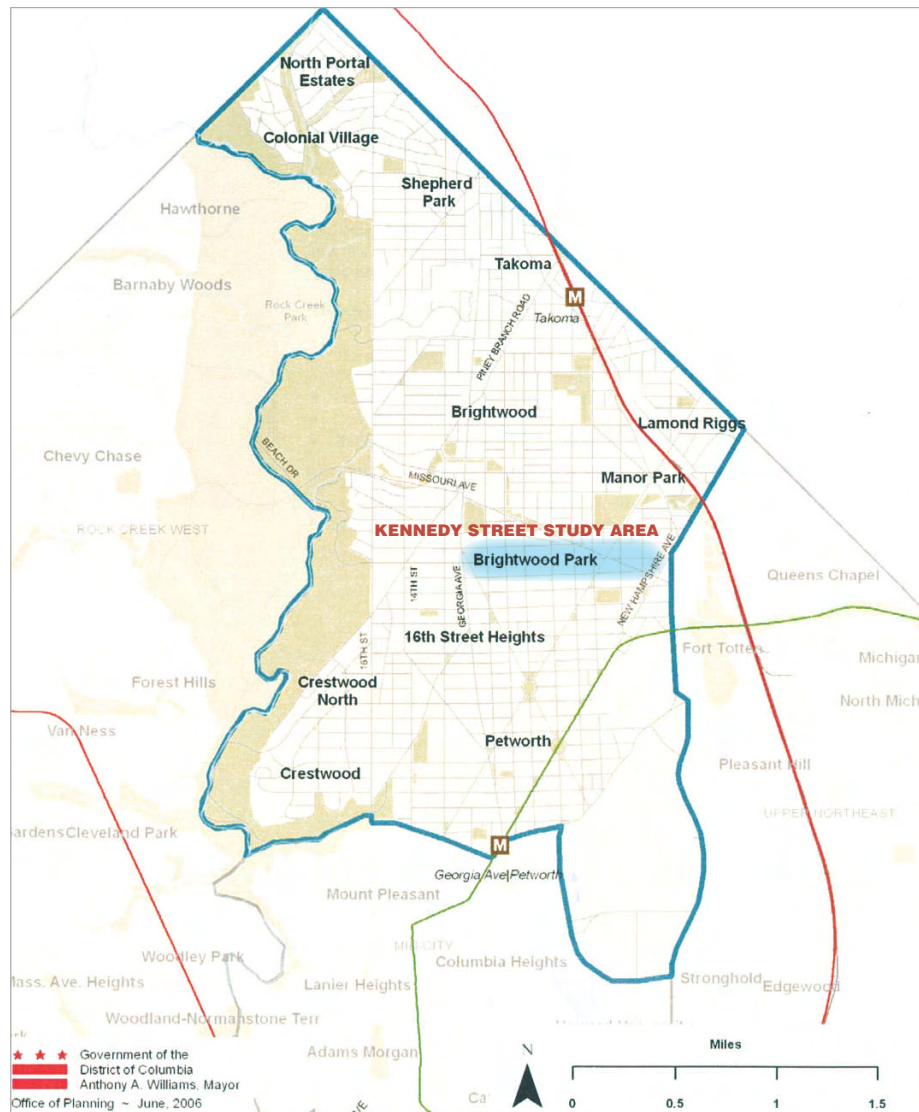
- The population of the corridor, as of 2005, totaled 34,450. Projections estimated by the Data Center of the District's Office of Planning (OP) show minimal growth over the next ten years – from 34,450 to 34,917, or 1.3%.
- The number of households is expected to grow by 1.8%, from 13,925 in 2005 to 14,174 in 2015. The household size is approximately 2.4 persons/household, comparable to the District's average household size of 2.3 persons/household.
- Parallel with the relatively slow population growth, employment projections for the area indicate only a slight increase, from 5,930 in 2005 to 5,981 in 2015.



The Kennedy Street Corridor and surrounding area divides along 5th Street into two census tracts.

- The area's median household income, as of the 2000 Census, was \$40,913 (or \$47,900 in 2006 dollars) slightly higher than the District-wide median of \$40,283 (\$47,200 in 2006 dollars), or 1.5%. Median household income within the two census tracts immediately surrounding the Kennedy Street corridor from Georgia to N. Capitol was approximately \$35,400, or \$41,400 in 2006 dollars.
- Home ownership percentages along the corridor, according to the 2000 census, shifted as one moved east of 5th Street, where home ownership amounted to approximately 58% of the total – almost exactly in line with the percentages for the Rock Creek East Planning Area as a whole. The home ownership percentage west of 5th was 43%, or almost the exact reverse.
- Data from the 2000 Census indicate that, of the total population living within the two census tracts containing the Kennedy Street corridor, approximately 85% are African-American, 12% are Latino, 4% are white, and less than 1% are Asian. (Because of rounding, the total equals more than 100%.)

kennedy street revitalization plan



DC Comprehensive Plan

Background to the Study

THE DC COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital provides the backdrop for the Kennedy Street Revitalization Plan, as it sets forth a series of core policy goals that contribute to an overall vision for the city as well as provide guidance for more place-specific planning efforts. The goals serve the Comprehensive Plan's broad objective of setting the stage for the District "to be a more 'inclusive' city – to ensure that economic opportunities reach all of our residents, and to protect and conserve the things we value most about communities."

In the context of Kennedy Street, it's important to note the Comp Plan's emphasis on targeting the rehabbing and production of affordable housing as a "civic priority."

One of the ways in which to describe "housing affordability" is through use of the term *Area Median Income* (AMI), which refers to the average income among the DC region's many households. (In 2005, the AMI for a family of four was \$89,300.) The chart on the following page describes how affordability is determined. In line with these categories, the District offers access to a number of affordable housing programs designed to serve households in each group.

CATEGORY	% OF AMI	ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PROGRAMS
Extremely low-income	Less than 30%	\$0 - \$30,000/year Parking lot attendant; Food prep worker	Full-time parking attendant; food preparation worker
Very low-income	30% - 60%	\$30,000 - \$54,000 Bookkeeper; Firefighter; Parking lot attendant; Food prep worker	Full-time bookkeeper; firefighter
Low-income	60% - 80%	\$54,000 - \$72,000 Nurse; Librarian; Fulltime firefighter; Receptionist	Full-time nurse; librarian
Moderate-income	80% - 120%	\$72,000 - \$108,000 Computer system manager; Nurse; Bookkeeper	Full-time computer system manager

The Comprehensive Plan places its affordable housing objectives within the larger context of distributing mixed income housing more equitably across the entire city. Mixed income development allows for the co-existence of a broad range of income levels and socio-economic groups; such development can include low-income, workforce, and market rate units, along with a mix of rental and home ownership.

Similarly, under the category of “economic development,” a major policy recommendation calls for promotion of “the vitality and diversity of Washington’s neighborhood commercial areas

by retaining existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and improving the mix of goods and services available to residents.” The Plan also notes that retention, attraction, and improvement will depend not only on private investment, but on “cooperation among merchants and property owners....The City can assist by providing technical assistance, financial incentives, and support to merchant associations, and by coordinating its revitalization programs with those of the private and non-profit sectors.”

The Kennedy Street plan’s implementation strategy (see Chapter 10) identifies a series of initia-

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Policy RCE-1.1.9: Traffic Management Strategies

Establish traffic management strategies to keep through-traffic on major arterials, separate local traffic from commuter traffic, and keep trucks off of

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Establish traffic management strategies to keep through-traffic on major arterials, separate local traffic from commuter traffic, and keep trucks off of residential streets. These strategies should include improvements to buses, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks, as well as measures to coordinate traffic signal timing and improve traffic flow. Particular focus should be given to Georgia Avenue, North Capitol Street, Blair Road, 14th Street, Missouri Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue, Kennedy Street, and Piney Branch Road.

2208 10

▪ Action RCE-1.1-A: Small Area Plan Priorities

Prepare Small Area Plans for the following areas in Rock Creek East:

- Upper Georgia Avenue NW (between Decatur Street and Eastern Avenue) including the Brightwood neighborhood
- Kennedy Street NW
- Spring Road Public Facility Campus 2208 14

▪ Action RCE-1.1-B: Façade Improvements

Implement urban design and façade improvements in the established commercial districts along Georgia Avenue, Kennedy Street, and 14th Street. 2208 15

Policy RCE-1.2.6: Small and Minority Businesses

Assist small and minority businesses along Kennedy Street, Georgia Avenue and other Rock Creek East commercial districts in providing neighborhood services and creating job opportunities for area residents. 2209 6

As seen in these excerpts, the Comprehensive Plan urges assistance to small and minority businesses along Kennedy Street, as well as façade improvements; It also takes heed of the corridor's role as one of the few east-west transit routes in the Rock Creek East Planning Area.

During the last several years, the District has targeted resources to the area for crime prevention, community clean-up, and public safety. This has generated interest in the area and attracted new residents. While the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor are quite stable, demographic changes have altered the kinds of retail services that are needed. Typical businesses on the corridor currently include convenience stores, beauty/barber shops and carry-outs. Over the next two decades, Kennedy Street should evolve into a more vibrant mixed use shopping area, with vacant storefronts reoccupied once again and new opportunities for local-serving businesses. The success of existing businesses also should be encouraged as this revival occurs. 2214 2

Policy RCE-2.4.1: Kennedy Street Improvement 2214

Improve Kennedy Street between Georgia Avenue and 1st Street NW as a locally-oriented neighborhood shopping street. A distinct identity should be created for the street in order to boost the performance of existing businesses and attract new businesses to the vacant storefronts on the corridor. 2214 4

Policy RCE-2.4.2: Housing along Kennedy Street

Encourage moderate density mixed use projects along Kennedy Street, including housing. Capitalize on the new Wellness Center by promoting new housing for seniors in its vicinity. 2214 5

▪ Action RCE-2.4.A: Complete Kennedy Street Strategic Development Plan

Develop a small area plan and implementation strategy focused on vacant and underutilized commercial properties along Kennedy Street. The Plan should identify the potential for new and expanded residential, commercial and mixed-use development, and should include actions to make the area more attractive place for local residents to shop. 2214 6

▪ Action RCE-1.1-C: Industrial Zone Buffers

Develop a design plan to implement buffering techniques that protect residential areas from adjacent industrial sites, especially along Blair Road and Chillum Place. 2208 16

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tives, linked to these policy recommendations, that can be applied to the corridor's revitalization.

FROM THE COMP PLAN TO THE SMALL AREA PLAN

The 2006 Plan proposed that the Kennedy Street corridor be the subject of one of three Small Area Planning priority studies within the 7.1 square mile Rock Creek East Planning Area (the other two being Upper Georgia Avenue between Decatur Street and Eastern Avenue and the Spring Road Public Facility campus).

Small Area Plans (SAPs) are designed to supplement the Comprehensive Plan by providing detailed direction for the development of specific neighborhoods within the larger planning district. Looking for significant public input, the SAPs allow citizens to develop strategic priorities that will shape future development; identify gaps and opportunities in City services and resources that are deployed at the neighborhood level; and ultimately help to shape critical capital budget decisions and agency investment priorities at the City level. Regarding Kennedy Street, the Comprehensive Plan recommended that this planning effort “identify the potential for new and expanded residential, commercial and mixed-use development, and should include actions to make the area a more attractive place for local residents to shop.”

Under the general heading of “Guiding growth and neighborhood conservation,” the Comprehensive Plan articulated a series of action steps for Kennedy Street, including implementation of urban design and façade improvements and assistance to small and minority businesses. The Plan notes that “over the next two decades, Kennedy Street should evolve into a more vibrant mixed use shopping area, with vacant storefronts reoccupied once again and new opportunities for local-serving businesses.”

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: The Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan and Kennedy Street

Beginning in 2001, the Office of Planning undertook a community-based planning process that led to the creation of a series of Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAPs). At the heart of these plans, each of which examined one of 39 so-called “neighborhood clusters,” was a set of priority issues identified by residents working with neighborhood planners from the OP, accompanied by a series of related action and response items. Overall, the SNAPs focused on influencing the City's allocation of human and financial resources as well as informing the priorities of nonprofits, of faith-based organizations, and of neighborhood leaders working towards the improvement of individual communities.



The institutions along Kennedy Street – its churches, service agencies, and charter school – help to anchor a neighborhood characterized by easy links to the City's Metro system via bus routes and by many examples of solid housing stock.

Cluster 17 encompassed the neighborhoods of Brightwood, Takoma, and Manor Park, and thereby included Kennedy Street. Overall, Cluster 17's three major priorities, as articulated in the SNAP, focused on:

- Enhanced, attractive, well-maintained public infrastructure and public and private spaces;

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- Public safety; and
- Quality public education.

For Kennedy Street specifically, emphasis was placed on:

- Enforcement of litter laws, particularly at 1st and Kennedy and 5th and Kennedy; and
- Provision of consistent and balanced police presence, particularly at 1st Place between Kennedy and New Hampshire Ave.

According to the SNAP report, Police Service Area (PSA) officers were to have initiated an educational program regarding litter laws shortly after publication of the plan. Regarding public safety, the plan stipulates that all PSAs have officers assigned to bike and foot patrol, with redeployed officers assigned to foot patrol.

Participants in the planning process further reinforced the importance of these concerns by highlighting, as the first element of their Vision for Kennedy Street, a neighborhood that is Clean and Safe, with the goal of ensuring “a clean, safe and beneficial environment where it is enjoyable to live, work, and be entertained.” (The community’s complete Vision and accompanying goals can be found in Chapter 6.)

KENNEDY STREET AS A NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENT FUNDING AREA

Helping to support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan as they relate to Kennedy Street, the area has been targeted as one of twelve neighborhoods eligible to receive funding from the Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF); the Brightwood NIF area is bounded by Fern Street and Fern Place to the north, Kennedy Street to the south, 5th Street to the east, and 16th Street to the west. Sponsored by the Deputy Mayor’s Office for Planning and Economic Development, the NIF provides dollars for projects that focus on economic development and revitalization. The NIF also facilitates creative partnerships among

District agencies, the nonprofit sector, and the private sector. This plan recommends that the NIF boundary is extended along Kennedy Street to North Capitol Street.

SCOPE OF THE KENNEDY STREET REVITALIZATION PLANNING STUDY

Drawing on the recommendations of the Comprehensive and Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans and other District-wide policies and programs, and working with a consulting team led by Boston-based Goody Clancy, the District’s Office of Planning undertook a planning study to improve Kennedy Street’s overall economic and physical vitality.



The portion of the plan outlined above represents the core of Kennedy Street study area.

The scope of work identified a series of key study tasks:

- Creating a business improvement strategy;
- Building a set of redevelopment scenarios; and
- Formulating a neighborhood-scaled urban design framework that would build upon the street's unique characteristics and enhance the walkability, attractiveness, and vibrancy of the corridor

With this scope, the study identified the major assets that characterize the corridor, including:

- Strong residential housing stock
- Major east-west and north-south bus routes, each of which is no more than six-to-seven minutes from a Metro stop
- A diverse community comprising a mix of long-term residents and relatively recent arrivals committed to the creation of an improved Kennedy Street
- Strong local institutions, including a number of faith-based organizations.

At the same time, the study looked at the key challenges facing the community and the City in connection with the corridor's physical and economic revitalization. Physically, the corridor lacks

proper streetscape and public realm amenities. This absence of a pedestrian-friendly experience along the corridor is only exacerbated by unfriendly, often-times cluttered storefronts, and by a general mismatch between existing retail offerings and current (as well as projected future) demand. Issues of safety and corridor "cleanliness," perceived or otherwise, that were identified in the earlier SNAP persisted as additional challenges during the course of the study.

While identifying development scenarios and implementation strategies to improve the corridor both physically and economically, the study sought ways to preserve housing affordability and to avoid displacement either of current residents or current businesses. Given the lack of City control over any of the corridor's properties, as well as the fractured ownership pattern along the corridor, the study focused on a handful of critical, but at this stage potential, redevelopment sites, indicating the kinds of approaches that could be taken to improve the corridor in terms of land use, physical design, and economic opportunity.

EARLY REDEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION INITIATIVES

Independent of the planning study, public investment has occurred on the corridor, particularly in connection with the newly-opened Senior Wellness Center along the 300 block of Ken-

nedy Street. Private-sector residential activity can be seen along the 900 block, with 11 new units under development. An apartment house along the north side of the 800 block is to be converted into condominiums, while a four-unit condominium conversion at the corner of 8th and Kennedy has been fully leased. A further sign of potential new activity is the nearly 12,000sf parcel at the northeast corner of N. Capitol and Kennedy, which is, as of Fall 2007, for sale. In addition, the District Department of Transportation has undertaken sidewalk improvements along many stretches of the corridor, and has begun installation of new bus shelters at key intersections.

It's important to note that the community, collectively and individually, provided significant insights into the corridor's conditions, both social and physical. Whether at public meetings, during sessions with the Advisory Committee, or in the course of a corridor "walk-about" (see page 3.15), residents, business proprietors, and other stakeholders offered their experiences of and responses to Kennedy Street as a place in which to live, work, and play. By pinpointing specific geographical areas of concern along the corridor – whether in terms of safety, aesthetics, or walkability – they provided the team with an important layer of understanding how the corridor currently "works" and how – and where – it might work better.

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revitalization plan

In particular, many existing community residents voiced their concern about the potential for the plan to attract a significant amount of new people and new development along the corridor that may displace the existing residents and businesses. It is the intent of this plan to guide development in a manner that will provide opportunities for existing businesses and people to thrive in an economically vital and aesthetically improved Kennedy Street.

Existing Conditions and Character

The next chapter expands on this broad overview by detailing the corridor's existing physical profile and character, including current land uses, zoning, transportation, and open space and institutional resources.

